rice and other foodgrains from time to time to avoid heavy and unjustifiable loss to Government. The public can rest assured that the prices charged will be as low as is possible consistent with a fair return to State cultivators and avoidance of heavy loss to Government in respect of imported food.

FOOD PRODUCTION SCHEMES

The Cochin Government have not contented themselves with assuming the role of a suppliant for food, they have done what they could, not only to ensure the equitable distribution of what is available at reasonable prices, as described above, but also to increase production and the nutritive value of the food available. The Food Production drive so vigorously conducted by the Hon'ble Minister has resulted in 11,249 acres including reserve forest areas being leased out for cultivation, no mean achievement in this densely populated State. Also at the suggestion of the European member of this House Government launched an ambitious scheme for the clearing, under Government control, of vast areas of forests and the planting of hill paddy and other food crops. In all 12,000 acres have been cleared or partially cleared, and up to now 5,375 acres have been sown with hill paddy, 2,000 acres planted with tapioca and 625 acres with other crops. The Superintendent hopes to plant up the remaining 4,000 acres in the near future. It was hoped to cultivate a greater extent of hill paddy this year, but sufficient seeds could not be obtained. The intention is greatly to increase the area under hill paddy next season, when the total area will be increased to 20,000 acres. Considerable difficulties were experienced in rushing through such large scale agricultural operations in so short a time involving the clear felling of large areas of forest in areas infected with malaria, at a time when, due to extensive recruitment for Assam and Ceylon labour units, little surplus labour fit for heavy manual work was available. In the circumstances, the progress made, between December when work started and July, must be considered satisfactory. Financially good results are expected; as against an estimated expenditure of Rs. 7·20 lakhs this year, and some expenditure on harvesting operations next year, a crop worth Rs. 13,10,000 is expected to be harvested, besides large receipts from the sale of timber. A large portion of the area is not suitable for permanent cultivation and arrangements are being made for reafforestation along with cultivation. Messrs. Walmesley and I. Raman Menon have rendered valuable service as Honorary Advisers.

Government have also endeavoured to increase the nutritive value of rice and its food content by insisting on undermilling and encouraging handpounding. A scheme is being evolved by the War Publicty Department, aided by a handsome donation from Mr. Alagappa Chettiar, to put into use throughout the State a large number of wooden hand-pounding machines which besides producing more nutritive rice, will give part time employment to many women.

Thus the Cochin Government in making their claim to a fair share of foodgrains available in India can assert that they have done everything within their power to improve the position in the State, by eliminating almost entirely the hoarder and the profiteer, by obtaining physical possession of most of the grain surplus to the cultivators' requirements and all imported grain, by distributing it equitably throughout the State, treating rich and poor alike and by increasing home production so far as is possible. We have done our part, and we feel that justice demands that the surplus and selfsufficient areas in other parts of India should see to it that we do not continue to suffer from scarcity as we have been for the past 15 months.

Before I leave the subject of food, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar once more for his friendly and powerful co-operation extended again to Cochin, during this year, in tackling both this major problem and other problems, in respect of which the two States have worked together in friendly and fruitful harmony.

STANDARD CLOTH

Next only to food among the necessities of life comes cloth, and a provision of Rs. 2,20,000 for 1118 and Rs. 31,20,000 for 1119 has been made under "Advances Recoverable" for the purchase of Standard Cloth. Government had from the very beginning agreed to participate in the Standard Cloth Scheme of the Government of India and our first indent was sent so far back as December 8th 1942. The Government have now been informed that an allotment of 4,64,845 yards of Standard Cloth will be sent to the State very shortly, being our quota from May to July. It will be followed by a further quota of 31 lakhs yards to be delivered between August and January. Cloth will be distributed through Fair Price Shops at the rate of 3 yards per head for adults and 1·5 yards for children.

IRRIGATION SCHEMES

Closely connected with increased food production is the question of irrigation. The Government believe that a forward policy in irrigation is essential at this time and have acted

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accordingly. That progress in major irrigation has not been rapid is due to the necessity for careful scientific investigation of important irrigation schemes, to ensure that money is wisely spent and the best use made of the water available. The services of Mr. C. V. Stephens, an irrigation expert who has recently retired from Madras Service, were obtained as consulting engineer, and while his primary duty was to investigate the important Chalakkudi Scheme he has also examined several other schemes which have been or are being investigated. A detailed survey of the entire area proposed to be benefitted by the Chalakkudi Irrigation Scheme had to be made and in view of the magnitude of the scheme, this has taken time. The investigation has just been completed and the estimating is now being done. Provided the approval of the Travancore Government is received in time, it is hoped to start execution of the scheme in September and a provision of Rs. 2½ lakhs has been made in the budget.

The Thottara Puncha Scheme after further detailed investigation was not proceeded with in its original form as it was decided that the lands were not suitable for two crops. An alternative scheme to safeguard the puncha crops from draughts and the ingress of salt water is under consideration and as Travancore is also concerned, consultation with that Government is now being carried on.

Closely connected with the original Thottara Puncha Drainage Scheme is a scheme to safeguard the adjoining kari nilams in the villages of Amballur and Keecheri. An estimate of Rs. 37,000 has been sanctioned for this scheme which will be carried out in 1119.

The important Kambalathara Reservoir Scheme costing Rs. 98,750 is to be taken up in 1119. The scheme provides for the conversion of the existing Kumbalathara Eri into a pucca Reservoir with a capacity of fifty million cubic feet.

Two other schemes designed to increase food production to be examined by Mr. Stephens are the Puthur River Diversion Scheme and the Thannikudam Scheme. A provision of Rs. 20,000 has been made in the budget for the former scheme. Schemes for encouraging the construction of private eries in Chittur Taluk and for converting part of the Conolly Canal into a fresh water canal are under examination. The Madras Government have not yet consented to the latter scheme.

Besides these major irrigation projects the Hon'ble Minister has carried through a heavy programme of minor irrigation works and has planned a further large programme for next year. Details of the progress made will no doubt be given in the Hon'ble Minister's speech.

Earthwork on the first section of the Chalakkudi Anamallais Road is almost complete and metalling and construction of bridges are in progress.

Progress in the important work of construction of groynes to prevent erosion in the coastal areas south of the harbour, has been retarded due to the heavy demand for stone for harbour and defence purposes, which has had to be given priority. However, breakwaters have been constructed protecting a mile of coast and boulders have been collected for protective works covering a further mile. A provision of Rs. 75,000 has been made in the budget for groynes covering a further two miles.

Under waterworks, there is a provision of Rs. 1,15,000 for maintaining and improving the water supply for the Cochin area. For Security reasons it is not possible to give details, but it may be said that the improvements proposed will secure an adequate and reliable supply.

A popular scheme to be undertaken during 1119 is the deepening of the Trichur navigation canals.

Applying the "inescapability" criterion, building work has been reduced to a minimum. The cost of maintaining roads has inevitably increased due to the great increase in the cost of labour and materials, but here too every possible economy has been exercised, the thickness of metal being reduced except on the important trunk roads.

SALT MANUFACTURE

In the Excise Department the most interesting development was the attempt to produce salt in the State. Despite most unfavorable weather conditions the experiment made at Malipuram by an experienced Salt Officer, obtained from Madras, showed that prospects were favourable. Endeavors are now being made to arrange for a local capitalist to take the area on lease and manufacture salt. Sales of abkari shops resulted in a striking increase of Rs. 7,35,811.

NATION BUILDING DEPARTMENTS

While first priority in respect of both endeavour and expenditure has to be given to measures designed to avert starvation, to maintain Law and Order and public morale and to help the war effort, keeping always in mind the necessity, as an anti-inflation measure to apply the "inescapability" criterion to all expenditure, it has proved possible to allot additional funds to nation-building departments, both to meet inevitable increases in expenditure due to war

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